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9 The Value of the Curriculum Center's Mission Statement: Meeting the Needs of Evolving Teacher Education

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This chapter explores the value of creating a mission statement to help redefine the academic library's curriculum center in the context of the current dynamic teacher education environment. The mission statement and related texts, such as vision, values, and guiding principle statements, define the purpose of the center for its constituents. It acts as a bridge between communities of practice and organizations, demonstrating the relationship of the center to the teacher education program, the academic library, and the college or university. Most importantly, the mission statement provides guidance for making policy and procedure decisions that are proactive. In an evolving education environment, a mission statement affirmed through assessment processes remains relevant to its constituents now and in the future.

In the preface to *Libraries, Mission, and Marketing: Writing Mission Statements That Work* (2004), Linda K. Wallace writes, "Seeing mission statements colorfully written and prominently posted opened my eyes to their power. I began to wonder why more libraries don't make better use of their mission statements.... Librarians complain that their work is undervalued, but they are better at describing what they do—collect, organize, preserve, etc.—than at communicating why their work is important and the difference it makes in people's lives" (pp. v–vi). The same can be said of curriculum centers. Historically defined as a special collection within the academic library or education program, the curriculum center's purpose has been to provide a physical space for curricular materials. In fact, the Association of College and Research Libraries

(ACRL) *Guidelines for Curriculum Materials Centers* defines the term *curriculum materials center* as “a physical location of a curriculum materials collection” (ACRL, 2009b).

This limited definition of the curriculum center, however, does not describe the curriculum centers that our current (and future) teacher candidates need. They are entering a dynamic profession that is being transformed by changes—in government policy, in technology, in our understanding of the biology and psychology of learning, in a professional culture that increasingly emphasizes student learning outcomes. They are expected to be competent in recognizing and adapting to a range of learning styles, to be proficient in the use of multimedia technologies, to have subject expertise, to use classroom assessments to provide evidence of student learning, to be reflective about their own teaching effectiveness, and to grow and improve. In order for the curriculum center to be important in the education of these future teachers—to make a difference in their lives and, through them, in the lives of children—the curriculum center of the twenty-first century is being redefined as more than a physical space housing collections of materials. Curriculum centers still provide quality curricular resources for teacher candidates and the faculty in teacher education programs, as well as other user groups. Increasingly, however, they are a constellation of resources and services beyond their collections, depending upon the unique needs of the educational program they support. As the curriculum center evolves, the mission statement is an essential tool in redefining the curriculum center and its value to teacher education.

This chapter advocates the use of the mission statement as a tool for change. It is not a how-to guide for writing an effective mission statement; many of those guides already exist. Rather, it focuses on the benefits of using the mission statement to identify and affirm the essential work of the curriculum center looking forward. Those benefits include communicating the purpose of the center to the people who need to know, bridging organizations (big and small, internal and external), guiding day-to-day decisions (what Wallace [2004] calls “putting the mission statement to work” [p. 24]), and engaging oth-

ers in the ongoing transformation of the curriculum center as a vital resource for learning.

Using the Mission Statement to Communicate the Curriculum Center's Purpose

The dynamic environment of academic libraries and the struggle to keep them relevant to students and faculty who have access to a broader range of information resources than ever before have been well documented. As far back as 2004, Stephen Abram listed “sustaining relevance” as the number one concern of libraries in his presentation to the American Library Association (Abram, 2007, p. 119). In order to maintain collections and services, library administrators are being asked to provide evidence of the library's impact on student learning and faculty research. In *The Value of Academic Libraries* (2010), a survey of current practices commissioned by ACRL, Megan Oakleaf writes, “[Academic] librarians no longer can rely on their stakeholders' belief in their importance. Rather, they must demonstrate their value” (p. 11). When budgets do not keep pace with operational costs, administrators allocate resources to the areas whose value to the academic endeavor they know and understand.

An effective mission statement is one tool for communicating the curriculum center's value. An effective statement establishes organizational focus, identifies its constituents (or stakeholders), motivates (or inspires), and indicates measures for success. It should “deliver a clear, brief, and dynamic message” (Wallace, 2004, p. 4). The lack of mission statement—the inability of the curriculum center to deliver a clear, brief, and dynamic statement of purpose—may contribute to misunderstanding or devaluation of the center's institutional role. Surprisingly, many centers do not have mission statements readily accessible on the Web. In preparation for writing this chapter, we surveyed the Web sites of the 204 centers included in the sixth edition of the *Directory of Curriculum Materials Centers* (ACRL, 2009a). While we may have missed some mission statements due to the dynamic nature of Web addresses and the search limitations of content management systems, we found

that only thirty-nine centers listed in the directory (19 percent) have posted a mission statement on their websites. (A list of the centers with mission statements posted online is included in appendix 9.1.) A recent study on the research behavior of undergraduate students found the Web (specifically the use of Google as a search tool) was an integral part of their search strategy, whether as part of course-related or everyday life research (Head & Eisenberg, 2009, p. 15). The lack of an identifiable mission statement on the curriculum center's website (or the lack of a website) communicates a strong message that the center is out of date technologically and out of step pedagogically.

An effective statement of purpose provides organizational focus: why the curriculum center is important and the difference it makes to its stakeholders. The mission statement for the MERIT (Media, Education Resources, and Information Technology) Library at the University of Wisconsin–Madison communicates its organizational focus:

Our Mission: “We provide creative and personalized solutions that make your work possible.” [MERIT] ...offers information and technology services to the School of Education and UW–Madison community partners. MERIT is designed as a collaborative and comprehensive cluster of service and support for the School of Education, the UW–Madison and beyond. Staff play an active role in the design and implementation of programs which connect the K–12 community to UW–Madison. (University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2010)

MERIT focuses on offering services that make a difference to the education community at UW–Madison, emphasizing collaboration (“personalized solutions” and “programs which connect the K–12 community” with the university) and a dynamic environment (a “creative” environment in which staff “play an active role in the design and implementation of programs”). The statement speaks directly to its user groups (“We... make your work possible”), offering creative solutions tailored to meet their information needs. The result is a motivational

Figure 9.1. The MERIT Library at University of Wisconsin–Madison features user-oriented, open spaces with integrated services. (Photograph provided by Anna Lewis, University of Wisconsin–Madison)



statement. Even the inclusion of media and technology in its name demonstrates MERIT's commitment to the integration of research and technology tools into teacher preparation, supporting National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Standard 6e (NCATE, 2008, p. 45). Although the MERIT library offers extensive physical and virtual collections, the mission does not include collections as a defining characteristic of the center. The MERIT library's mission statement describes a very user-focused, contemporary curriculum center meeting the information needs of educators in the twenty-first century.

Because a curriculum center serves multiple constituencies, an effective mission statement often identifies stakeholder groups and clarifies its purpose for each. The Kalikow Curriculum Materials Center at the University of Maine Farmington (UMF) provides a good example of a mission statement that clearly identifies its stakeholders as primary users of its services:

The Kalikow Curriculum Materials Center provides materials and educational experiences for pre-service teachers at UMF

to enrich their teaching of children and youth, birth through age 20, supports the professional development and pedagogy of practicing teachers in western Maine, and is available to education and special education professionals in the community, individuals with disabilities, and their families. (UMF, 2007)

The statement provides a hierarchy of roles and relationships. Teacher candidates at UMF are the primary user group for the center, as indicated by their position (first in the series) in the statement and the scope of resources and services available to them ("materials and educational experiences... to enrich their teaching of children and youth, birth through age 20"). The word *enrich* describes the value the center adds to this user group. The practicing teachers of western Maine are the second-most-important user group; by stating its relationship to this group, the center is identifying its strong, supportive relationship to public education in the region. The scope of service to practicing teachers is defined as support for "professional development and pedagogy." The scope of service ("support for") is much less defined for practicing teachers in the region than for the primary user group, allowing more flexibility for the curriculum center to expand or limit services to this group as resources are available. Finally, the center is "available" to other "education and special education professionals in the community, individuals with disabilities, and their families." The word *available* indicates the most passive level of service provided to the third user group.

In both examples, the mission statement clearly articulates the purpose of the curriculum center to the people who need to know—its stakeholders. Both statements extend beyond the ACRL (2009b) definition of the curriculum center ("a physical location of a curriculum materials collection") to describe dynamic environments where collaboration and "educational experiences" occur. Both place the center within the context of the broader educational community. Although relatively short, these mission statements capture some of the big changes occurring in today's curriculum centers.

Using the Mission Statement as an Organizational Bridge

The curriculum center is a bridge between two different (but closely related) communities of practice, the library and education communities. Sometimes the center resides within the academic library, sometimes within the education program. In some institutions, both the library and the education program feel "ownership" for the center. At other institutions, the center is more closely aligned with one organization than the other. An effective curriculum center mission statement demonstrates the relationship of the center to the teacher education program, the academic library, and the college or university, and it can be used to align and integrate with them.

Two important documents for curriculum centers, one from the professional library community and one from the education community but both issued in February 2010, illustrate this intersection. *Information Literacy Standards for PK-12 Pre-Service Teachers* from the Educational and Behavioral Sciences Section (EBSS) of the ACRL division of American Library Association, provides standards for education librarians. This document uses the vocabulary of the library community (e.g., "information literacy") to describe information and research competencies for teacher education (EBSS Instruction for Educators Committee, 2010). *Educator Preparation: A Vision for the 21st Century*, prepared for American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education and Partnership for the 21st Century, provides guidance in teacher education reform (Greenhill, 2010). While discussing a range of literacies (information, communication, technology, or ICT, as well as media, financial, and economic literacy), this document does not mention libraries or librarians. One key statement from the document, "find good information quickly" (Greenhill, 2010, p. 10), is the closest to direct information skills librarians practice. While the library community assumes that libraries are the resource for developing these literacies, the education community often does not. Therefore, an effective curriculum center mission statement will explicitly make the

connection between library services and the development of effective teachers so that both communities of practices see the center as a place where they intersect.

Some curriculum centers are using *Empowering Learners* (formerly *Information Power*), the recently updated standards for school libraries developed by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), to articulate this intersection. The mission of school libraries articulated in *Empowering Learners* is to “insure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information” (AASL, 2009, p. 8). Several curriculum center mission statements incorporate this language to demonstrate their link to the school library. For example, the mission statement for the curriculum center of Kutztown University of Pennsylvania states, “In combining these materials with appropriate instruction, we hope to ensure that students, faculty, staff, and local patrons are effective users of ideas and information” (Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, n.d.). The phrase “effective users of ideas and information” clearly creates a connection between the curriculum center and the school library that teacher candidates will encounter in their education curriculum and fieldwork.

The center’s mission statement clarifies the broader relationship between the education and library communities by using the vocabularies of both. For example, the Curriculum Materials Center at Minnesota State University–Moorhead begins its mission statement, “The Curriculum Materials Center supports the mission of the Library and the University, as well as the Conceptual Framework of the Education Unit” (MSUM, 2008). By referencing the conceptual framework of the institution’s education program, the center signals its support for the standards for accreditation from NCATE—it uses the vocabulary of the education community of practice. The center’s mission statement interprets for the academic library the current praxis within the education community and vice versa, thereby strengthening the relationship between the two. As a result, the curriculum center is better positioned to help today’s students and faculty successfully use a full range of information competencies.

Some mission statements are even more direct in connecting the two communities of practice. The mission of the curriculum center at Chicago State University states: “With the primary aim of meeting the practice-oriented information needs of its users, the Center collaborates with the university’s academic library and its College of Education to provide services and products that develop content knowledge, increase awareness of instructional options, and encourage innovation in curriculum development and teaching methods” (CSU, 2006, p. 1). Whether through subtle use of vocabulary or direct statements of relationship, the mission statement can be very effective in articulating the role of the center as a bridge between the library and education program.

The mission statement and clarifying documents such as vision and values statements, goals, and guiding principles provide tools for building and clarifying relationships between the center and its constituents. By articulating both shared purpose and significant difference, the center’s mission statement demonstrates the “value added” by the center. The mission statement for the Curriculum Resource Center at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) illustrates this point:

The Curriculum Resource Center (CRC) supports the undergraduate and graduate teaching programs in the College of Education and Human Development and other BGSU education-related areas by maintaining a collection of high quality preschool through grade twelve materials reflecting innovation in teaching practices and standards-based instruction. Materials held by the CRC comprise The Frances F. Povsic Collection, so named on March 30, 2001, in honor of Professor Povsic’s significant, enduring and distinctive contributions to the CRC, University Libraries and BGSU. (BGSU, n.d.)

The statement uses descriptive language to illustrate the qualities the center shares with specific programs it supports: “high quality... materials reflecting innovation in teaching practices and standards-based instruction.” In other words, by being selective and remaining

current with and modeling best practices in education, the center shares the values of the teaching programs at BGSU. Additionally, the center makes a unique contribution to the university by housing the Povsic Collection in honor of a valued professor's contributions to the center.

The curriculum center is sometimes a bridge between the institution and the local community, including outreach to area teachers and other educational practitioners as part of the center's mission. The center at Appalachian State University states that "to lay the foundation for the development of professional collaboration patterns between teachers and librarians/school media specialists, and to model an exemplary school media center" is part of its mission (ASU, n.d.). The current higher education environment often emphasizes community outreach, service learning, and collaboration with community partners as strategies to enhance student learning and to strengthen the institution. In institutions that employ these strategies in support of the institutional mission, the curriculum center mission statement can reflect alignment between the institutional and center missions.

Figure 9.2. Student and community children engage in active learning at the Instructional Materials Center at Appalachian State University. (Photograph provided by Margaret Gregor, Appalachian State University)



In addition to acting as a bridge between the center and organizations outside of the academic library, the curriculum center's mission statement can also bridge organizational units within the library. As a special collection within the academic library, the center's collection sometimes represents challenges for other units within the library. For example, it may use a different classification system (Dewey Decimal rather than Library of Congress), requiring that circulation staff and student assistants receive special training for the reshelving materials or that the center have separate staff for processing and managing materials. The mission statement bridges the gaps between the organizational units by showing how the center aligns with the mission of the library while clarifying its reasons for the diverging practice.

In our own experience developing a mission statement and other foundational texts for the Curriculum Center at Eastern Washington University (EWU), the process provided an opportunity to align the center with the mission of the library and the mission of the teacher education program while maintaining the distinction of the center's specialized programs and services (Miller & Meyer, 2008). Learning Resource Librarian Nadean Meyer was hired in 2006 to turn an outdated collection of curricular materials into a curriculum center for the twenty-first century. Her first task was to develop a foundation document to clarify the mission of the "new" center. Working with Associate Dean Julie Miller and meeting with faculty and students in the education programs, Meyer drafted a foundation document that included vision and mission statements, a statement of values, and guiding principles for the center. The mission statement is a succinct statement of purpose: "The Curriculum Center promotes excellence in teaching through the use of quality resources" (EWU, 2007). Among the guiding principles, she included two principles that clarify the center's relationship to EWU Libraries, the "parent" organization:

- "While providing specific practical materials for teachers and prospective teachers in the EWU community, the Center is an integral part of EWU Libraries' services and collections."
- "As a special collection, the Curriculum Center includes resources that are used for teaching while EWU Libraries' main

collections contain a range of materials about teaching and education." (EWU, 2007)

The first statement makes it clear that the Curriculum Center is not an unrelated unit that happens to be housed within the library. It implies that library policies apply to the center as well as to other units of the library, that center staff participate in library governance and employee development activities, and that other units of the library provide support for the center. This principle has been very important in developing procedures for the Curriculum Center that diverge from procedures supporting the general circulating collections. Providing current, high-quality resources—"specific practical materials"—is essential to meet the needs of the teacher candidates preparing to enter the classroom. While deselection is seldom done in the general circulating collection at EWU, the Curriculum Center's collection must be weeded regularly in order to fulfill its mission. Meyer has worked with the Cataloging and Acquisitions unit to change expectations and develop procedures to accommodate a different practice within the Curriculum Center. As a result, the center has a more rigorous program for deselection than the collection management of the general circulating collections.

The second guiding principle cited above defines the Curriculum Center's collections. Prior to the development of this statement, the Curriculum Center at EWU had no collection development policy, which had led to a hodgepodge of dated resources. A focus on practical resources "used for teaching" defines the relationship between the Curriculum Center's collections and the library's general education collection. This definition was a catalyst for discussions about the role of historical children's literature at EWU Libraries and allowed selective weeding of literature that was no longer appropriate for the Curriculum Center, but also not appropriate for the general circulating collection of education resources. Ultimately, we sent hundreds of these books to a regional historical children's literature collection at the University of Washington.

These examples demonstrate the use of the Curriculum Center's mission statement and guiding principles to clarify the organizational relationship between the library and the Curriculum Center. The process

of using these statements to define the scope of the collections improved understanding and strengthened the relationship between the Cataloging and Acquisitions unit of the library and the Curriculum Center staff. These examples also demonstrate the use of the mission statement and supporting documents to guide decisions in a practical way.

Using the Mission Statement to Guide Decisions

One of the primary benefits of articulating a mission for the curriculum center is to guide decision making. As a part of the strategic planning process, the mission statement can help decision makers "make today's decisions in light of their future consequences. It can help them develop a coherent and defensible basis for decision making... and exercise maximum discretion in those areas under their organization's control" (Bryson, 1995, p. 7). In short, the mission statement guides resource allocation.

Surprisingly, very few current curriculum center mission statements allude to resource limitations. The curriculum center at Western Illinois University follows its mission statement with the goal "to build as fine a collection of teaching materials as funds and efforts permit" (Western Illinois University Libraries, 2008). The University of British Columbia's curriculum center uses the words "cost effectiveness and coordination with the Faculty of Education" in its goal statements (UBC, 1996). In both these examples, the goal statements acknowledge limitations. In a time of generally decreasing resources at the university level, a mission statement that establishes priorities for resource allocation supports the center's ability to fulfill its core functions. Whether the purpose of the center is traditional and focused on collections or evolving to encompass additional resources and services, an effective mission statement guides decisions about resource allocation, including decisions about collections, technology, environment, staffing, and services.

The traditional definition of a curriculum materials center is its collection, as evidenced by the ACRL definition, the ACRL Curriculum Materials Center collection development policy, and the mission statements of several curriculum centers. The mission statement is a powerful tool for decision making with regard to scope and depth of collections.

When opportunities for collection development occur—such as large donations, new types of resources, or a particular emphasis on genre or language—the direction provided by the mission statement determines whether to proceed. The mission statement for the Learning Resource Center at Baylor University provides a good example of a mission statement that guides decisions about the collection:

The mission of the Learning Resource Center of the School of Education is to meet the needs of both faculty and students by providing materials related to the subject fields, to child and adolescent learning, and to professional knowledge that support the SOE curriculum, and to offer students experience in using equipment and materials similar to those they will use when they begin teaching. Maintaining excellence in service, environment, and resources, the LRC will adapt to the changing needs of students and faculty, to the goals of the 2012 Vision, and to the continually developing teacher education program. (Baylor University, n.d.)

The statement is broad enough to allow flexibility to collect a range of types of materials, but specific enough to develop a selection checklist. Figure 9.3 shows a mock selection checklist based on this example.

The mission statement provides guidance in terms of the content of the collections, the format or medium (“using equipment and materials similar to those [teacher candidates] will use when they begin teaching”), and the currency and accuracy (excellent resources that meet the changing needs of faculty and teacher candidates). This example demonstrates how a mission statement can guide decisions about collections in a practical way that insures the collection will adapt and evolve as the education environment changes.

One obvious use of the mission statement for determining the scope of the collection is in defining the diversity of materials. NCATE standards and school reform emphasize diversity, but institutional definition of and emphasis on diversity of resources may vary. An effective mission statement clarifies how diversity of resources is mani-

Figure 9.3. Mock Selection Checklist for Donations Based on the Mission Statement of the Learning Resource Center at Baylor University

Content	Criteria
	Is the resource in a subject field relevant to teacher candidates?
	Is the resource about child and/or adolescent learning?
	Is the resource about professional knowledge that supports the SOE curriculum?
Format or Medium	Criteria
	Is the resource in a format or medium that teacher candidates will use when they begin teaching?
Currency and Accuracy	Criteria
	Does the resource provide current information appropriate to the teaching environment?
	Does the resource provide accurate information appropriate to the current teaching environment?

festated in the individual curriculum center. As stated in its mission, the curriculum center at Berry College includes an “outstanding collection of children’s works as well as books that reflect diverse culture and perspectives” (Berry College, n.d.). The mission statement for the center at the University of West Georgia defines diversity of resources to include “children’s and young adult books that have been cited for controversy or censorship problems to show the cultural diversity of society, thus widening the students’ horizons and increasing their sensitivity” (UWG, n.d.). For this curriculum center, *diversity* refers not just to cultural diversity but also to controversial materials, enabling teacher candidates to explore issues of censorship prior to working in the school.

An effective mission statement provides guidance for resource allocation beyond collection development. The increase in technology within academic libraries and the K–12 environment creates a need for technology access and equipment in the curriculum center in order to prepare teacher candidates. In this dynamic environment, many curriculum centers use the mission statement to address the role of technology in fulfilling the center's purpose. The Educational Technology & Media Center (ETMC) at James Madison University emphasizes technology as central to its purpose, as reflected in its mission statement:

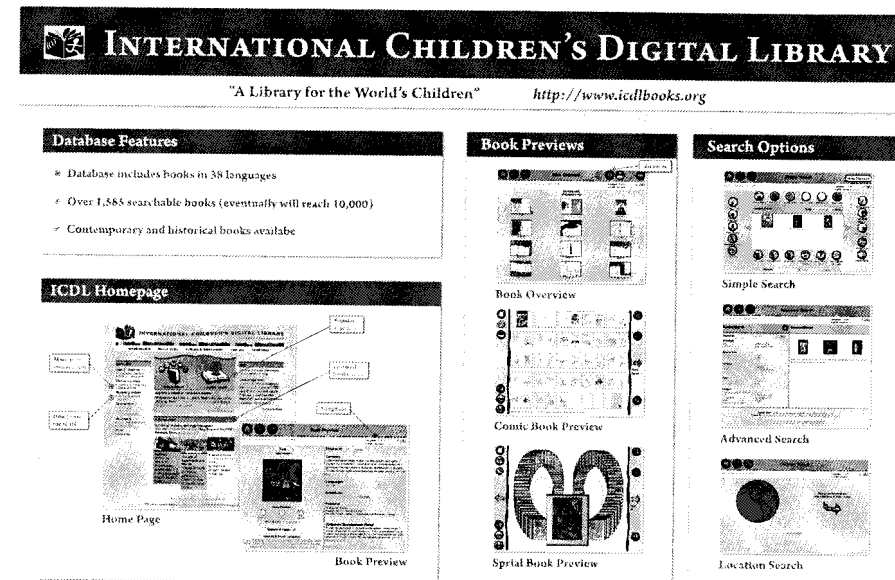
ETMC is committed to preparing all students in the College of Education and Professional Education Unit to be knowledgeable users of educational technology.... ETMC promotes the use of emerging technologies for learning and is responsive to educational technology needs of faculty and students in these programs. (JMU, n.d.)

Not only does the statement acknowledge the importance of instructional technology, it directs the center to identify and make available "emerging technologies for learning." Based on this statement, one expects the budget allocation for ETMC to reflect the emphasis on technology. Additionally, the selection process for technologies focuses on "emerging technologies for learning," providing teacher candidates with access to current instructional technologies they can expect to use in classroom. Current curriculum center mission statements use a range of terms to address technology resources, including "multimedia" and "assistive technology devices."

As instructional technologies continue to shape K–16 education, the mission statement can also guide decisions about the curriculum center's physical and virtual environments. The allocation of physical space at a university is very important and should be aligned with its mission. "Statements of purpose bring structure and culture into tangible form, and physical space makes mission imperatives—and thereby structure and culture as well—even more concrete" (Fugazzotto, 2009,

Figure 9.4. The International Children's Digital Library, a free children's e-book collection, is an example of a technology-based resource that curriculum centers are beginning to include in their collections.

(Poster created by Nick Brown, University Graphics, Eastern Washington University)



p. 293). With the traditional focus on materials collections, the curriculum center has primarily been a physical location where collections are housed and specific activities may take place. The mission statement provides a guide for the allocation of this space. Mission statements for curriculum centers sometimes include descriptive terms such as "model school library," "laboratory," or even the more general "active area" to communicate this element of the center's purpose. For example, the mission statement for the center at Appalachian State University describes the Idea Factory, "a media production facility designed exclusively for education students and area educators" (ASU, n.d.). If the center is located within an academic library where quiet study spaces are the norm, then it becomes even more important to include some language about the active use of the space in the center's mission.

As the curriculum center evolves to include digital resources and virtual services to meet the needs of teacher candidates in twenty-first-

century classrooms, its statement of purpose must also evolve to include the virtual environment. In their Project Information Literacy Progress Report *Lessons Learned: How College Students Seek Information in the Digital Age*, Head and Eisenberg (2009) found that students used research strategies that "leveraged scholarly sources and public Internet sites and [they] favored brevity, consensus, and currency in the sources they sought" (p. 3). The challenge for the curriculum center is to create a blended physical and virtual environment to support and enhance students' research strategies. By addressing this challenge in the mission statement, the curriculum center has a guide for developing the blended physical and virtual environments to meet the specific needs of its stakeholders.

The mission statement for the education library at the University of British Columbia (UBC) provides an example of a center that integrates both physical and virtual resources and services throughout its statement of purpose. Its mission is to "provide outstanding access to the universe of recorded knowledge and information in the field of education." Strategies to accomplish this mission include linking "faculty and students to the very best information resources available and to provide electronic access to specialized BC and Canadian education resources" and providing a library instruction program "to develop those competencies necessary to use changing information technologies and to develop an awareness of the world of information" (UBC, 1996). The UBC education library's mission statement provides a guide to resource allocation to insure its users have access to the best education resources and services to meet their needs.

Although human resources are the most important (and expensive) consideration in resource allocation, relatively few mission statements for curriculum centers include this vital resource. With a few exceptions, the people responsible for fulfilling the mission of the curriculum center are silent partners in its statement of purpose. The Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison vision statement is notable for stating the center "has staff expertise in book arts, book evaluation, multicultural literature, alternative press

publishing, and intellectual freedom" (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1999). The curriculum center at the University of British Columbia expands its basic mission statement to include a reference to human resources: "Librarians and staff will strive to do the following," with a list of activities for implementing the mission (UBC, 1996).

Because the mission statement guides decision making, the danger in excluding human resources from the mission statement means making them invisible when establishing priorities for resource allocation. In *The Value of Academic Libraries* (2010), Oakleaf describes a "shift in library emphasis from collections to experience, from resources to educational impact.... [L]ibrary value is increasingly invested in service aspects and librarian expertise" (p. 23). A recent survey of curriculum centers in Australia finds the same shift occurring in those centers: "Curriculum collections were perceived as more than just a collection of resources—often the real value lay not just in the resources, but also in the staff knowledge and expertise and services offered, all of which added value for students and academics" (Locke, 2007, p. 205). For curriculum centers making this transition from a collections-based to a service-based center, the mission statement should explicitly address the realignment of resources to include the librarians and staff providing expertise and service.

The emphasis on service is beginning to be reflected in the library literature for curriculum centers. The 2009 revision of the ACRL *Guidelines for Curriculum Materials Centers* includes the same services as the 2003 version: reference, instruction, faculty liaison, outreach, and production. The 2009 version, however, redefines outreach services to encompass services to students from other institutions, educators in the community, homeschoolers, and others, and adds a new service category for distance learning, focused more narrowly on faculty and students in the institution's distance programs. Additionally, the 2009 guidelines for delivery of instruction have been revised to insure virtual instruction includes a range of appropriate techniques (ACRL, 2009b). Of the online mission statements for curriculum centers listed in the sixth edition of the *Directory of Curriculum Materials Centers* (ACRL, 2009a), most of the statements still focus primarily on collections to define their

purpose. (See appendix 9.1 for the list of curriculum centers whose mission statements were reviewed for this chapter.) Eight of the mission statements, however, refer to provision of resources and services about equally (phrases include “resources and services,” “services and products,” “instructional materials, equipment, and services,” “resources, programs, and services,” “services and materials,” and “services and collections”). A few of the mission statements specify the information services provided by the curriculum center. Appalachian State University, for example, cites reference services, reader’s advisory, and instruction as three information services provided by the curriculum center (ASU, n.d.). The MERIT Library at the University of Wisconsin–Madison seems to be unique in focusing its mission on information and technology services and excluding collections from its mission statement (University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2010). It remains to be seen whether the MERIT Library is a predictor for things to come and information and technology services—not collections—become the primary focus for future curriculum centers.

Used strategically, the mission statement guides decisions in support of the curriculum center’s purpose. It can also be used to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to change. This use of the mission statement is particularly beneficial for helping the curriculum center remain relevant to its users in a rapidly changing environment.

Using the Mission Statement to Remain Relevant

Information about how curriculum centers are adapting to the evolving conditions of the educational community and academic libraries is scarce in the library literature. Some current challenges are summarized in Rae-Anne Locke’s survey of thirty Australian curriculum centers (2007), which provides a snapshot of current practice in Australia. The survey includes open-ended questions including, “What challenges and issues do you see facing Curriculum Collections?” and, “Briefly comment on the future directions of Curriculum Collections as a resource for future educators, staff and students” (p. 212). In her findings, Locke identifies the following challenges as emergent themes:

- need to make spaces vibrant and integral to the teaching and learning environment
- need to integrate print and digital collections to raise students’ awareness and use of all resources
- need to demonstrate a link between the collections and services and the student learning experiences
- difficulties caused by the reduced resource and staffing budgets
- need to actively engage academics in the collection (p. 194)

Some of the mission statements at American institutions (such as the Instructional Materials Center at Appalachian State University and both the MERIT Library and CCBC at University of Wisconsin–Madison) indicate that American curriculum centers are facing similar challenges. The mission statement is an effective tool for anticipating changes in the education environment while remaining focused on the center’s purpose. A mission statement that is user-centered, focused on the future, and grounded in assessment insures the center will remain a vital contributor to the educational mission of the institution.

A user-centered mission statement requires that the curriculum center respond to—or (even better) anticipate—the needs of its constituents. The Education Resource Center (ERC) at Chicago State University, for example, explicitly states that meeting users’ information needs is its purpose:

With the primary aim of meeting the practice-oriented information needs of its users, the Center collaborates with the university’s academic library and its College of Education to provide services and products that develop content knowledge, increase awareness of instructional options, and encourage innovation in curriculum development and teaching methods. (CSU, 2006)

This statement holds the center’s staff accountable for the center’s success based on student learning outcomes. The center is responsible for insuring teacher candidates develop content knowledge, are aware of

Figure 9.5. College students interact with Robert Reid Laboratory School students at the El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Día) Celebration hosted by the Curriculum Center at Eastern Washington University Libraries, April 2008. (Photograph by Jelleen Miller, Eastern Washington University Libraries)



instructional options, and become innovative teachers. These outcomes are central to the ERC's purpose. Resources and services that do not contribute to these outcomes may be extraneous or no longer relevant and therefore candidates for elimination. A user-centered mission statement helps to keep the center aligned with its purpose when external forces exert pressure to change. Sometimes the external force is negative (e.g., cutting the budget), but sometimes the external force comes in the form of an opportunity (e.g., hosting a traveling exhibit, partnering on a large grant, accepting a donation of materials). When faced with such pressures, applying the user-centered mission statement to the situation insures the decision will be the one most beneficial to the center's users and therefore most likely to insure the center's relevance.

A mission statement that incorporates measurable outcomes or strategies for assessment will help the curriculum center remain true

to its purpose. In the goals accompanying the mission statement, the curriculum center at University of British Columbia deliberately incorporates the assessment process:

Central to an effective teaching and research environment are friendly and knowledgeable staff with a sustained commitment to continuous improvement of information services and programs. Advisory committees, focus groups, performance measures and other strategies will aid in determining client needs. The overall purpose is to facilitate the best use of information technologies to advance scholarship, teaching and learning at UBC. (UBC, 1996)

This statement directly addresses the current challenges reflected in the Australian survey. The staff is directed to "sustained commitment of continuous improvement." The UBC statement also lists specific methods for "determining client needs." The wording implies integration of collections by stating "best use of information technologies" to advance the center's mission. This part of the goals gives specific direction to the assessment process (by listing specific forms of constituent input and measures), and the goal statements imply the importance of the assessment process for keeping a curriculum center relevant.

In addition to incorporating the assessment process into the mission statement itself, the mission statement can be used with other strategies to insure the curriculum center remains relevant to its stakeholders. One strategy is to include revision or affirmation of the mission statement as part of the center's (or academic library's) strategic planning cycle. Including the approval or revision dates, along with the approving or endorsing authority, insures continuity within the organization. The approval date also serves as a reminder to review, modify, or affirm the purpose of the center as the organizational environment evolves over time. The mission and goal statements for the curriculum center at UBC, for example, are dated 1996, and their relevance to the current education environment illustrates how effectively the center and

its stakeholders anticipated change.

Another strategy is a data collection model called "Monitoring Our Mission" that places the mission statement at the center of the assessment process for the curriculum center. The model was developed for results-oriented educational planning (Holcomb, 1999) and has been adapted for evaluation of school library media centers (McGriff, Harvey, & Preddy, 2004). It can be easily adapted for the curriculum center. Monitoring Our Mission uses a grid to determine "what evidence, if any exists to prove that the stated mission is being accomplished" (McGriff, Harvey, & Preddy, 2004, p. 26). A three-column data collection grid helps to identify existing evidence for fulfillment of the mission as well as gaps in the evidence. The columns are headed (from left) "what we say," "evidence we have," and "evidence we need." Phrases taken directly from the mission statement are listed in the left column, and sources of data for each phrase are listed in middle column. Missing evidence, if any, is listed in the right column (Holcomb, 1999, pp. 30–32). The gaps in evidence can be as revealing as the evidence itself. Sometimes missing evidence reflects the difficulty of assessing a particular outcome. More importantly, the gap may indicate that an outcome has become a low priority and resources are no longer allocated to accomplish it. This model is useful because it focuses only on data related to the mission (McGriff, Harvey, & Preddy, 2004)—the most meaningful data for insuring the curriculum center remains relevant to its users.

Positioning for a Vital Future: The Changing Mission

In the context of a dynamic teacher education environment and increasing demand for accountability within higher education, a clear articulation of the purpose of the curriculum center is a powerful tool. Put another way, "mission statements make explicit the structural purposes of their organizations" (Fugazzoto, 2009, p. 289). Our Web review of curriculum center mission statements indicates many curriculum centers do not have a mission statement or are not posting the statement on the Web. Perhaps these curriculum centers believe their stakeholders understand the center's mission based on the traditional definition of

the center as a physical location housing curricular materials. Indeed, this definition is still common in the library literature (ACRL, 2009b; Fabbi, Bressler, & Earp, 2007). We believe that curriculum centers that have not articulated their purpose within the context of the current education environment are risking their own demise.

As teacher education environment evolves, the curriculum center must evolve as well in order to remain vital to its users. We have highlighted mission statements (in some cases, portions of mission statements) that reflect the variety of purpose and organizational focus in curriculum centers today. This variety is essential given the unique mission of each institution of higher education within its community of service and the unique role of the education program and the academic library within the college or university. A good mission statement makes explicit the curriculum center's distinctive contributions in meeting the needs of its stakeholders (Wallace, 2004, p. 7), so each center's statement of purpose should, of course, reflect its unique circumstance and reason for being.

Change in the labor force is an urgent reason to revisit the curriculum center's mission. Frequently, special collections such as the curriculum center are directed by champions and catalysts—librarians with the vision, expertise, and focus who drive its mission. As these champions for the curriculum center retire or are reassigned within the organization, the center may lose its voice for articulating the value of the center. A strong mission statement that has been approved or endorsed by stakeholder groups insures continuity and provides clarity for the new director and staff, who can then use it to address future challenges and to implement change collaboratively. Engaging stakeholders—education faculty, library colleagues, administrators, teacher candidates, practitioners, and other key constituents—in the mission review process will insure the curriculum center remains a vital learning resource.

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Appendix 9

The mission statements for the following curriculum centers were found online and reviewed for this chapter (in alphabetical order by institution).

Name of Institution	Name of Curriculum Center	Location	Web Address
Adelphi University	Curriculum Materials Center	Garden City, NY	
American University	Curriculum Materials Center	Washington, DC	http://www.american.edu/library/collections/cmc.cfm
Appalachian State University	Instructional Materials Center	Boone, NC	http://www.library.appstate.edu/imc/
Asbury College	King Curriculum Lab	Wilmore, KY	http://www.asbury.edu/academics/departments/education/overview/king-curriculum-lab
Baylor University	Learning Resource Center	Waco, TX	http://www.baylor.edu/soe/index.php?id=65432
Berry College	Curriculum Materials Center	Mt. Berry, GA	http://www.berry.edu/library/page.aspx?id=8662
Boston College	Educational Resource Center	Chestnut Hill, MA	http://www.bc.edu/libraries/collections/erc.html

Name of Institution	Name of Curriculum Center	Location	Web Address
Bowling Green State University	Curriculum Resource Center- The Frances F. Povsic Collection	Bowling Green, OH	http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/crc/
Brevard College	Curriculum Materials Center	Brevard, NC	http://www.brevard.edu/Academics/Library/Collections/CurriculumMaterials/tabid/449/Default.aspx
Bridgewater State College	Educational Resource Center	Bridgewater, MA	http://www.bridgew.edu/library/erc.cfm
Central Connecticut State University	Curriculum Lab	New Britain, CT	http://web.ccsu.edu/library/curriculumlab/
Chicago State University	Education Resource Center	Chicago, IL	http://library.csu.edu/erc/
East Carolina University	Teaching Resources Center	Greenville, NC	http://www.ecu.edu/cs-lib/trc/index.cfm
Eastern Michigan University	Educational Resource Center	Ypsilanti, MI	http://www.emunix.emich.edu/~abednar/erc/
Eastern Washington University	Curriculum Center	Cheney, WA	http://research.ewu.edu/content.php?pid=87256&sid=837496
Elon University	Curriculum Resource Center	Elon, NC	http://www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/education/crc/default.xhtml

Name of Institution	Name of Curriculum Center	Location	Web Address
Fayetteville State University	Curriculum Laboratory	Fayetteville, NC	http://www.uncfsu.edu/soe/CURLAB.HTM
Gonzaga University	Curriculum Center	Spokane, WA	http://www.gonzaga.edu/Academics/Libraries/Foley-Library/Departments/Curriculum/default.asp
Harvard University	Monroe C. Gutman Library	Cambridge, MA	http://www.gse.harvard.edu/library/index.html
Illinois State University	Teaching Materials Center	Normal, IL	http://www.gse.harvard.edu/library/index.html
James Madison University	Educational Technology & Media Center	Harrisonburg, VA	http://www.jmu.edu/coe/etmc/
Kansas State University	Curriculum Materials & Juvenile Literature	Manhattan, KS	http://www.lib.k-state.edu/services/cmc.html
Keene State College	Curriculum Materials Library	Keene, NC	http://www.keene.edu/cml/
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania	Curriculum Materials Center	Kutztown, PA	http://kucmc.wordpress.com/

Name of Institution	Name of Curriculum Center	Location	Web Address
Liberty University	Curriculum Library	Lynchburg, VA	https://www.liberty.edu/informational-services/ilrc/library/curriculumlibrary/index.cfm?PID=409
Minnesota State University - Moorhead*	Curriculum Materials Center	Moorhead, MN	http://www.mnstate.edu/cmc/AboutCMC.cfm
Missouri State University	Curriculum Resource Center	Springfield, MO	http://library.missouristate.edu/meyer/crc/index.htm
Mount Vernon Nazarene University	Educational Resource Center	Mount Vernon, OH	http://library.mvnu.edu/screens/ercservices.html
Radford University	Patricia Langford Roughton Teaching Resources Center	Radford, VA	http://trc.asp.radford.edu/Shannon/mission.htm
University of British Columbia	Education Library	Vancouver, BC	http://www.library.ubc.ca/edlib/nav/mission.html
University of Maine -Farmington*	Kalikow Curriculum Materials Center	Farmington, ME	http://kcmc.umf.maine.edu/
University of North Carolina - Greensboro	Teaching Resources Center	Greensboro, NC	http://www.uncg.edu/soe/trc/index.htm
University of West Georgia	Teaching Materials Center	Carrollton, GA	http://tmc.ed.westga.edu/

Name of Institution	Name of Curriculum Center	Location	Web Address
University of Wisconsin - La Crosse	Alice Hagar Curriculum Resource Center	La Crosse, WI	http://www.uwlax.edu/murphylibrary/departments/curriculum/about.html
University of Wisconsin -Madison	Media, Education Resources & Information Technology (MERIT)	Madison, WI	http://merit.education.wisc.edu/Library/Overview.aspx
University of Wisconsin -Madison	Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)	Madison, WI	http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/
University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh	Educational Materials Center	Oshkosh, WI	http://www.uwosh.edu/library/emc/
Washburn University	Curriculum Resource Center	Topeka, KS	http://www.washburn.edu/mabee/crc/
Western Connecticut State University	Curriculum Collection	Danbury, CT	http://www.washburn.edu/mabee/crc/
Western Illinois University	Curriculum Library	Macomb, IL	http://wiu.edu/libraries/curriculum_library/index.php
York University	Education Resource Centre	Toronto, ON	http://edu.yorku.ca/erc.html

*Indicates center is not included in the Directory of Curriculum Materials Centers 6th ed.